XX

Sandstorm

WE HAD HARDLY left the Nufud, bound for the Jabal Tawil, about a hundred and fifty miles distant, when we rode into a gentle drizzle. A segment of a rainbow curved over the sand-dunes like a gleaming scimitar. Thunder rumbled from afar. 132 ●

"O Thou, Almighty!" exclaimed Faris. "Blessed sound that promises us pasture!" The clouds came lower. Their grey tails swept the dune-tops. Forked lightning flashed and thunder rolled majestically, shaking the air. A fine hail rustled down. And then the clouds burst. The sand sang under the lash of the rain; the hair curled up on the drenched camels, and we riders dripped as though we had just been pulled out of water. But the deluge soon ended and a warm wind fanned us, drying man and beast. Soon the sun was out again—and by afternoon the deeper red of the dunes was the only sign that it had rained.

Two days afterwards we had descended into the stifling atmosphere of the lowlands, where the wind was driving dense dust-clouds before it.

We weathered the first day of it, though it blew with unremitting fierceness and perseverance. But on the next day it developed into a veritable sandstorm of such violence that one could barely keep one's seat in the saddle. I counselled beating back into the Nufud and there, in some low-lying depression, waiting for the storm to blow

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

132 [134] itself out. In the red sand one is quite safe. Its specific gravity is considerably greater than that of white or yellow sand, and after sufficient winter rain it is more or less covered with some vegetation.

My comrades, however, were of the opinion that the strength of the storm was already broken, that it could not possibly last longer than two days. We therefore continued our ride, hoping to see on the morrow the sun shining again on a tranquil land. But the third day was a repetition of the second, a howling gale, clouds, whirling sand, and no visibility beyond ten paces.

The heat would have been tolerable, but the air was so sultry that we dripped sweat from every pore. The perspiration could not evaporate in this muggy air, and to this discomfort was added the irritation from the driven dust. This was something new for me in Arabia. No matter how high the temperature, I had always found the air quite dry; even in winter, after rain or a thunderstorm, it will remain light and refreshing.

Half-suffocated by day, by night we were chilled to the bone by icy blasts that searched our moist bodies, and made them shake with ague.

Our hands and faces were chapped. Even our tongues ached, though we had plenty of water. The fine, white sand penetrated everywhere—under the clothes, into nose, ears, and eyes, and covering the hair. Our lips became parched; the eyes, the throat, the palate hot with inflammation and pain; the breath came in pants, the blood hammered heavily in the heart and in the temples.

Our camels dragged themselves along only with the utmost effort, groaning and complaining. In one of the

L: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

saddlebags we carried one of our slaves, who had collapsed from exhaustion on the second day. 132

Faris had his fill of trouble with his young ostriches and their feeding. But in spite of the storm, he contrived to forage for them and always produced something—caterpillars, beetles, fresh grass and shoots, a lizard, bustard eggs. Several times a day he would direct a few spurts of milk from his *dhalul* (which had calved, as I mentioned) into the gaping mouths of the chicks. But for all his pains, the storm cost him the life of one of them. [231]

On the third day of the storm, Faris fell ill. It was a sudden attack: first vomiting, followed by chills and fever. I kept constantly by his side, but he became alarmingly weak, until finally we had to arrange a saddlebag as a litter to carry him.

At night the storm abated somewhat, but there was no sign of a star. It was very dark and cold, and fine sand continued to blow.

On the fourth day the storm took on fresh fury. The wind howled more fiercely than ever. Our lungs were choked with dust. Worn out by the constant buffeting and sleepless nights, with aching joints, dead-tired, at the end of our strength, we groped our way forward. Two camels dropped and had to be abandoned. Their riders and loads had to be distributed among the other exhausted animals.

The worst of it was that Faris had become delirious. In the saddlebag of another camel, Dhadan, the slave who had fallen sick two days before, lay in a stupor, looking more dead than alive.

J: Rawan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

●132 At last a vague something loomed through the driving sulphur-coloured sand-clouds; its outline grew less blurred and assumed a comforting solid shape. It was a rocky ridge, a harbour of refuge. Camels and horses crowded close against one another, while above us screamed the storm, driving before it the sand, across the top of the sheltering wall. Exhausted, men and beasts sank to the ground.

Faris, lying on rugs, had fallen into a deep coma-like slumber. I tried to cool his burning forehead and forced a little water between his parched lips. After a couple of hours or so he awoke, looking better, and gave some signs of returning strength. All the others lay on their sheepskins like men struck down, sleeping the sleep of the dead. At length I, too, propped against Maha, was overcome by sleep.

In the night I awoke, and my first thought was that I must be dreaming. A serene, starry sky looked down on a solitude sunk in deep calm. I threw off the warm fur coat which had been my coverlet and got up to look after my patient. As I bent over Faris, he opened his eyes and spoke to me. Thank Heaven, he was better and his brain was quite clear again. Hunger and thirst were his worst complaints now, and I had everything at hand to satisfy his needs. When I had also ministered to Dhadan, who had likewise improved and was able to take some stimulant, I rolled myself up once more in my fur, and instantly dropped back into deep sleep.

Daybreak found me half-awake and vaguely aware of it, through eyes still closed; but to my annoyance, Maha began to nuzzle me persistently. As I had not the least

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

desire to get up, I pushed her head away; but she continued to prod me and to whimper softly but meaningly, until I had to open my eyes. They fell on a scene transformed. The camels were all ready and saddled; Faris—I could hardly believe my eyes—was feeding his ostrich chicks, Dhadan was watering the horses, and Mnahi was moving down the rows of camels, carrying his cloak formed into a sack and scattering from it fresh shoots he had gathered for the *dhaluls*. By the "coffee-fire" squatted Ralib, brewing the bitter essence, the enticing aroma of which scented the air.

And the sun, the wonderful sun, shone again on a world renewed; even the farthest distances were visible through the crystal-clear air, scoured by the four-days' storm.

XIV

The Hunger March

AMIR FUAZ, who had gone to Damascus some time before, was to rejoin his migrating tribe when it had reached the *Wudian* district of Rueyshdat. That would be before the end of the week. I took advantage of the brief interval to make an excursion into the Harra with Faris and a few of his followers. I liked it no better than did our camels, though they were fresh saddle-animals.

The Harra is a long stony desert running southeast from the Jabal Druz (or Hauran) and borders on the great Arabian desert-plateau. Volcanic mountains overlook it on the northwest. It is intersected with a network of ancient camel trails, for in the Harra the routes of both the western and eastern Bedouin tribes cross. The region, up to the Jabal Enaza, has the reputation of being the coldest in North Arabia. It has a mean elevation of about three thousand feet, and for months in the year is exposed to chill northeast gales and cold snaps, when the thermometer will drop to six degrees below zero, Celsius (10.8 below freezing-point, Fahrenheit).

This year, indeed, the spring was a mild one throughout the region. But the monotonous, undulating, stony surface showed a touch of meagre vegetation only near rain pools in low-lying places. Elsewhere it was all gleaming flat flints, polished pebbles and porous pumice. Rust-coloured, bluish-grey, blackish and speckled splinters covered the floor of the Harra as with a coat of scales,

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

on gravel and sand, and then waits a whole year. At the expiration of that time he scrapes away the sand and gravel, takes out the star, and brings it to a good swordsmith, who melts and beats it into a saber which can be sold for one hundred Turkish pounds ($450). 821

If there is lightning and thunder, but the clouds begin to scatter and disappear, the Rwala pray: "O, that he, who sends (angels) to the cloud, may send (an angel) to it on eight riding camels and say to it: 'The gift (of God) shall come down.' *Jâ min jirsel las-saḥâb jirsel leh ṭamân erčâb w-jakûl leh 'aṭwa' jiği.*" If merciful Allâh spreads out the clouds on high and but few drops fall, the Bedouins lament: "After this (rain) we have lost what might have brought us gold, (we have lost it) like a vibrating mirage. Truly, we can do nothing without Allâh. *Min 'oḳbeh raddejna-d-ḏahâb miṯl ẓaḥẓâḥ as-sarâb 'oḳb allâh mâ ḥenna šien.*" Abundant rain would have given the camels good pasture and for well-fed old camels gold can be had from the 'Aḳejl.

The end of the rain in the daytime is announced by the rainbow, *sejf al-maṭar*. As soon it appears, the clouds grow calm; *ilja sajjefat kajjefat*.

SEASONS AND RAINY PERIODS

In summer the clouds are plentiful, but they bring no rain. Only in the autumn there becomes visible either on the right or on the left of the sun a sun dog, *middat aš-šams*, a sure sign that rain will soon come. In this season the seer, *ṣâḥeb as-sirr*, of the Nṣejr clan, Mbârek eben Ḥwêmel, takes a large handful of salt and, dividing it into six small heaps indicating the principal rains, arranges them in the form of a cross, *ṣallab*, thus: 821 791 787

o *shejlâwi*
o *šitwi* o *ṭrûwi* o *ṣejfi*
o *ǧôzâwi*,

and then lies down by them and waits for what Allâh's messenger will tell him during the coming night. On the next morning he and the others examine the heaps. The one where the most salt is melted is the one which will produce the most abundant rain.

The year of the Bedouins begins with the first heavy rain following the appearance of the star Canopus, *shejl*, in 805 132

805 the first days of October. "Canopus has shown himself; well,
132 then, let us go into the inner desert; *ṭala'at as-shejl nušarreż*," is now the cry of the Bedouins, who, leaving the borders of the settled and cultivated districts, wander with all their possessions into the interior of the desert in search of pastures. Canopus reigns for forty nights, after which the Pleiades, *ṯrajja*, take the helm for twenty-five nights, *ṯrûwi*, to be followed by Gemini, *ǧawza'*, for an equal period. Thus the reign of Canopus, the Pleiades, and Gemini lasts ninety days in all — three months — and this season of the year is called *aṣ-ṣferi*, corresponding approximately to October, November, and December. Next, the star Sirius, *aš-ša'era*, rules for forty nights; this season of the year is called *aš-šta'*. For fifty nights after Sirius the ruler is Arcturus, *as-smâk*, but in the middle of our April the reign of the stars ends, as then the summer, *aṣ-ṣejf*, appears, which lasts to about the beginning of June and is succeeded by the dry season, *al-ḳêẓ*, extending over four months, to about the first days of October. The Bedouin knows, therefore, five seasons of the year: *aṣ-ṣferi*, ninety nights (from the beginning of October to the beginning of January); *aš-šta'* forty nights (to about February 20), followed by a period sometimes called the second part of *aš-šta'*, ending about March 4; *as-smâk*, fifty nights (to the middle of April); *aṣ-ṣejf*, to the beginning of June, and the four months of *al-ḳêẓ*. The common Bedouin is quite ignorant of any other division of the year.

821 The rains are divided by the Bedouin into *al-wasm*, *aš-*
132 *šitwi*, *as-smâk*, and *aṣ-ṣejfi*. The first includes the rains of *as-shejlâwi*, *aṭ-ṭrûwi*, and *al-ǧôzâwi*, i. e. the rains of Canopus, the Pleiades, and Gemini, or the *aṣ-ṣferi* or autumnal rains.
[221] As soon as Canopus appears, the Bedouins leave their camps, pitched in the valleys and the broad dried-up river beds, which
[731] are often over two hundred kilometers long. After copious rains have fallen at the heads of these valleys, the water rushes wildly through the channels, washing away the camps and drowning both the people and their herds; hence the
[245] proverb: "When Canopus rises, trust not the creek and gather dates even at night; *ilja ṭala'at as-shejl lâ tâmen as-sejl wa-tlammes at-tamr bel-lejl*," because at that period the dates are ripe and no selecting is needed. The *shejlâwi* rain is also called
132 *al-ḫerfi* (or *al-herfi*). If the ground is thoroughly soaked with
137 it, *arż mawsûma 'alejha-l-ḫerfi*, there soon appear on all sides

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

the tiny pale-green leaflets of annuals, which the Rwala call "grasses," *'ešeb*, whereas the perennials are called by them "woody plants," *šaǧar*. If the *wasm aṭ-ṭrûwi*, the rain of the Pleiades, is likewise abundant, the grasses attain their full growth and the camels pasture on fresh *'ešeb* even before the winter, *aš-šta'*, sets in. 132 137

The most important rain of all is the *wasm aṭ-ṭrûwi*; it is the decisive factor for the future grazing. A copious rain of Gemini extending over wide areas assures the growth of both the grasses and the woody plants and banishes the dread of hunger. Sometimes at the end of the *ǧôzâwi* rain period comes a rain called *at-twejbe'* (of Aldebaran), which completes the fertility brought by the rains of Gemini, although not sufficient in itself to take their place altogether.

The *šitwi* rain, called also *an-nežžân*, will not assure a successful growth of the grasses if they have not already sprouted after the *wasm* rains. In the *smâk* and, especially, in the *ṣejf* seasons there are many very hot days, so that the grasses which came out from the ground after the *šitwi* rain grow yellow before reaching their full development. But the *šitwi* rain fills all the reservoirs with pure healthful water, which evaporates but slowly during the cold winter days and nights and in consequence remains pure for a long time. [312]

The rain of *as-smâk* is beneficial only when the soil has been thoroughly soaked by some autumnal rain, especially that of Gemini, for then both the grasses and woody plants are rapidly developed by *as-smâk* and the prosperity of the Bedouins in that particular season is well-nigh assured. Yet even the most abundant *smâk* rain is of but little account if it falls on ground already parched from lack of moisture from the preceding autumnal rains, for the hot sun of the following season, *aṣ-ṣejf*. will consume everything that the *smâk* has called to life.

An abundant *ṣejfi* rain leads to the destruction of the annuals, strengthens the perennials, and fills all the spring wells. The grasses refreshed by copious summer rain become luxuriant, quickly sending out new leaves and blossoms; but in a few days the scorching sun absorbs all their sap, withering them more prematurely than if *aṣ-ṣejfi* had not awakened them. The woody plants, on the other hand, having a longer period of vegetation, acquire from abundant summer rain so much moisture that they can attain their full development.

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

132 137 A luxuriant growth of perennials in the autumn is a sure sign that the particular district has been visited by good *ṣejfi* rains, whence the saying: "O that lovely little gazelle! it will eat its fill of the autumn pasture after the summer rain; *jâ 'ajn al-ḫšejf tar'-al-ḫelfi 'oḳb aṣ-ṣejfi.*" Abundant summer [312] rain also fills both the natural and artificial reservoirs, but such water soon swarms with frogs, *daṛâ'iṣ*, and all kinds of worms, which render it foul-smelling and undrinkable in a short time.

PRAYERS FOR RAIN

539* 789 If the earth does not receive abundant autumnal rain, the danger of a failure of the pasture, *maḥal* (or *muḥṭi*), arises. In order to prevent it, the girls and wives of the Bedouins form a procession with the *umm al-ṛejṭ*, mother of the rain (Fig. 1). A woman's gown is stretched over two sticks forming a cross and is carried by a girl (virgin) at the head of the procession, which wanders from tent to tent singing:

1. *Jâ-mm al-ṛejṭ ṛejṭina*
   belli bšejt râ'ina
2. *jâ-mm al-ṛejṭ ṛejṭina*
   min al-maṭar eẓina
3. *jâ-mm al-ṛejṭ ṛejṭina*
   min midd allâh meddina
4. *jâ-mm al-ṛejṭ ṛejṭina*
   min al-wabel enṭina.

O mother of the rain! rain upon us;
Wet the mantle of our herdsman.
O mother of the rain! rain upon us;
With pouring rain allay our thirst.
O mother of the rain! rain upon us;
From Allâh's measure measure out to us.
O mother of the rain! rain upon us;
A real flood let our share be.

[291] Verse 1. *Ṛejṭ* signifies a rain of at least four days' duration extending over a vast region. *Bšejt* is a cheap gray cloak made of wool or cotton waste. 2. The girls gradually increase their prayers for rain. At first they want the rain only to wet the herdsman's mantle; then they pray for a downpour, *maṭar*,

539* 789 804 Verse 3. *Ḥafna* is as much as the hand with the palm turned upwards and with bent fingers can hold, or a large handful. 4. *Kamša* is as much as can be held between the palm and the fingers of the hand turned downwards, or a small handful.

Erčebûni-l-ḥâši
w-eb'adû bikmâši
dem' 'ajni nawwâši
'ala-lli fâraḳûni.

Seat me upon a weak young camel,
And take away him who would hold me;
The tears of my eyes are exhausted
Weeping for him from whom they have parted me.

539* 789 *Ḥâši* is a camel not yet three years old; an older she-camel is called *ǧill*. The young camel suffers from lack of pasture and water, the girl from sorrow for her lost sweetheart, and both will perish if no one cares for them.

Erčebûni-l-ḥamra'	Seat me upon a bay mare,
w-eṭ'emûni tamra	Feed me with one date.
allâh jeṭûl 'omraḥ	Oh may Allâh prolong his life,
jowm hom ḫallaṣûni.	For they have liberated me.

They (her relatives) saved her from death by bringing back her lover, who did not perish of thirst in the raid.

Jâ ḏîb jâ ṭâred al-hejf
oṭrod habûb aš-šemâli
'ajjant 'alja' w-abu zejd
ahl al-ḳṣûr al-'awâli.

O wolf! O thou who strugglest with the hot south wind!
Drive away the cold breeze of the north wind.
Thou hast surely seen 'Alja and Abu Zejd,
Who used to dwell in manors high.

789 ● 132 825 The wolf is not injured by the various winds and thus reaches an age so great that he could tell much concerning the occupants of the demolished manors which he has seen. *Al-hejf* is the hot dry wind blowing in summer from the south-east, causing much suffering, especially to children and women. *Aš-šemâli* is the icy north wind, which destroys plants as well as animals and human beings. If it blows for some time, the grass freezes and both animals and men fall sick. There are

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

no rains after the *hejf.* in summer nor after the *šemâli* in winter. The wolf struggles, *ṭâred*, with the south wind and overcomes and drives away the north wind. Abu Zejd and his sweetheart 'Alja are the heroes of stories that are told among

FIG. 1—*Umm al-ṛejṭ*, mother of rain.

the settlers. They are supposed to have owned the towns now lying in ruins and to have lived in manors, the crumbling walls of which rise high above the horizon on the borders of the desert.

In every tent a gift of some kind is handed to the girls accompanying the *umm al-ṛejṭ*. Having visited all the tents in the camp, they go with their *umm al-ṛejṭ* to a small tent pitched at some distance, where they divide and eat whatever has been given them, remove the gown from the cross, and in the evening return to their tents.

PERIODS OF ABUNDANCE AND WANT

An abundant *wasm* rain, especially the rain of *aṭ-ṭrûwi* (of the Pleiades) assures to the Bedouins, as we have already said, a rich pasture of annual plants or grasses, *'eśeb*, and thus abundance, commonly called *rabî'*. In the inner desert

In the inner desert

132 the word *rabî'* does not signify a season of the year; it is
805 therefore impossible to translate it by the word spring, as we may when we are dealing with the settled and cultivated territories. The *fellâḥîn*, inhabitants of the cultivated territories, enjoy the *rabî'* from year to year, and, as it always begins at the same season, the *rabî'* for them signifies the
821 spring. The angel Ǧibrîn, who rules over the rain clouds, likes neither the Rwala territory nor the desert; therefore he spreads
132 his wings over them, so that it rains there only in narrow strips, i. e. where the rain slides off his wings. On the contrary, when he flies over the territory of the *fellâḥîn* he folds his wings as close together as possible, and then the rain falls everywhere. On his journey over the desert Ǧibrîn beats the clouds to make them fly the faster, but over the settled territory he leaves them in peace and it rains abundantly there. The teachers of the Koran in explanation of this conduct of Ǧibrîn say that he is angry with the Bedouins because they disregard the instructions which he imparted to the Prophet (Mohammed).

132 If the earth is not thoroughly soaked by any of the
137 autumnal rains, then there is no *rabî'*; *al-arẓ alli mâ tinwasem mâ terabbe' muḫṭije*. The abundance, *rabî'*, is also greater
611 and of longer duration if the ground, after its soaking by the autumnal rain, is visited in addition by an abundant *smâk* rain. Then the whole steppe and even the desert are transformed into a delightful meadow. Every valley and piece of low ground or gentle slope, all the plains composed of fine red sand, as well as the rifts and heights are at once covered with an infinite variety of annuals and perennials. The camels
231 nibble at the greatest dainties only and grow so fat that they
511 can hardly move. The milk often flows or drips from the udders of the she-camels, which are full to overflowing; the mares and foals roll about in the thickest grass and the Bedouins, men, women, old people, and children, have more sweet or sour milk and camel's fat than they know what to do with. Moreover, they have the hope of a sure profit in selling the superfluous old or sterile she-camels to the 'Aḳejl buyers, who pay well for fat animals. In a territory where there is a *rabî'* tents can be seen scattered all around. With plenty of good
[233] pasture close to their tents the herdsmen do not drive their camels far out. Pure cold rain water can be found in every low-lying place, rock crevice, and hole in the river beds. Every
515 one bathes, the clothes are washed, and parasites of all kinds

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

The chaff, *ḳišr*, which floats on the top is then thrown away, while the clean seed are spread on blankets and allowed to dry. Or the Bedouins lay the filled sacks when still moist in the sun, shake them until the seed fall to the bottom, throw away the chaff, and clean the seed once more, so that they may serve as an article of food in a poor season. This is called *semḥne* or *sebîb*.

The fertility, or abundance, *rabî'*, depends entirely on a luxuriant growth of the grasses, or annuals, not on that of the woody plants, or perennials. The latter become green even after a good *ṣejfi* rain, when the earth is well watered, *maṣjûfa*; but no *ṣejfi* rain can relieve the annuals, for the heat of the sun soon burns them. In the same year one tribe may have no *rabî'* at all, while another tribe, even a neighboring one, has abundance of everything. This difference is the more noticeable when the tribes are enemies. Of such a year they say: "This year has queer teeth; men live well (have something to bite into), and men die of hunger; *hâḍi-s-sene w-laha snûn nâs ja'îšûn w-nâs jemûtûn.*" The Bedouin also refers to a *rabî' al-mâš*, meaning a season when the entire growth consists of solitary grass patches insufficient to feed even the youngest camels; a *rabî' aṣ-ṣafâra*, when nothing grows except the *ṣafâra* with its yellow blossoms; a *rabî' ad-dimne*, when the grasses, though they may have sprouted and grown luxuriantly after the *wasm* and *šitwi* rains, fail to receive the *smâk* rain and become yellow as early as the end of March; a *rabî' an-nafǧân*, when all the plains and lowlands are thickly carpeted with grass; and, finally, a *rabî' aṭ-ṭafḥa*, when not only the lowlands but all the slopes, as well, afford luxuriant pasture.

Just as the Bedouins long for the *rabî'* years, so they fear the years of want, or *ḫawa'*. If for two or three years the rains in the autumn months have not been copious enough there are no grasses and the camels must live on the woody plants alone. The winter rain, *aš-šitwi*, makes these perennials swell, but during the hot *smâk* days they dry up, become unpalatable to the camels, and thus the actual *ajjâm al-ḫawa'*, or days of want, set in, a period in which many camels perish. But if the rains of the *ṣejfi* also fail, then not a single perennial shoots up, last year's offshoots fall to pieces, to be broken and scattered by the wind, and the region soon changes into

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

a dead and death-dealing desert. This[1] is the work of the woman sun, whose sole aim is to burn and destroy.

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HOT AND COLD WEATHER; DEWS; WINDS; FOGS; MIRAGES; SAND STORMS

132

The greatest heats, called *ḥâmm al-ḳlejbên*, occur in the season of *al-ḳêẓ*; *ḥamm as-shejl*, the season immediately before the rise of Canopus, is the next hottest. When the Pleiades, *aṯ-ṯrajja*, disappear from the heavens, every stalk dries up, *ilja ṛâbat aṯ-ṯrajja kil ʿûden jibes.*

The season of *aš-šta'*, with a few days before and after it, is the coldest of all; from about December 11 to January 20 is the time of the real winter, *al-marba'anijje.* The *šta'* cold is followed by the seven poisonous nights, *saba' semm*; then come the seven bloody nights, *saba' demm*; and finally seven nights in which the fat (of the camels) is either increasing or decreasing, *jisîr ad-desem w-lâ jisîr.* In explanation it should be said that the nights of the first and second week following the *marba'anijje* are often so cold as to make the life of both human beings and animals miserable; the noses of the camels even bleed from the effects of the cold. Not until the third week, or about the middle of February, do the cold nights begin to alternate with warm ones. In the daytime the earth is warm but at night the air stratum more than one meter above the ground cools off; wherefore the two giants (i.e. the camel and the palm) suffer much from cold, *bard aṯ-ṯawîlên.* In winter, *al-marba'anijje*, all of Palmyrena, all the territories of al-Ḥamâd, al-Wudijân, al-Ḥeǧera, al-Ḥunfa, Ḥesma', and even the Nefûd are covered with white frost, *ḥalît.* In Palmyrena, al-Ḥamâd, and al-Wudijân trees and bushes become white with hoarfrost, *ǧelîd*, at that time. Snow falls, *feleǧat ad-dinja*, in Palmyrena, al-Ḥamâd, and Ḥesma in large flakes, *ṯwêrât*, regularly every year, but as a rule it remains on the ground no more than one day, excepting in Palmyrena, where it sometimes stays longer, causing great losses to the owners of sheep and goats.

[821]

The dew, *ṯall, neda'*, or *ṯofal*, is plentiful all the year round, especially during the summer months. It is sent by the moon to refresh both the annuals, or grasses, *ʿešeb*, and the perennials, or woody plants, *šaǧar*, which otherwise could not support the sun's heat.

[821]

1 [The drought--Analyst]

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

132 not support the sun's heat. Hail falls sometimes instead of or with rain, and the hailstones are often of a size large enough to wound and even kill young camels.

[821] As every breeze comes from Allâh, nobody dares curse the winds. A light wind is called *hâwa*, also *habûb*; a strong one, *ṣalf*. The west wind is the most frequent. In summer it springs up regularly two hours after noon, cools the heat of the day, and is called *barrâd* or *ḏa'ḏâ'i*. The north wind, *aš-šemâli*, blows almost exclusively during the *šta'* season, dispersing the clouds and absorbing their water, and therefore called *as-salâjta*. In the winter time the Bedouin likes the south wind, *al-žibli*, best, as it is always accompanied by rain, *as-sḳajje*. The east wind, *aš-šerži* (or *aš-šeržijje*), generally blows for only three or four days, and the west wind always follows after it. Towards the end of the *smâḳ* and *ḳêẓ* seasons the east wind is especially strong, blowing then for as long as seven days and nights. It is called *semûm*, is exceedingly dry and hot, and causes much suffering especially among women and children. They would all perish if it blew for more than seven days. Sometimes the northwest wind, *an-načbe*, blows in winter, usually on nights when there is no moon and the stars alone are shining. A night of this kind is called *ǧird*; it is very bright, but icy cold. If a stiff but cold west wind blows at night, the night is called *šalta*. A warm, cloudless night is known under the name of *ḳamra zerîž*; a warm but clouded night is called *ẓalma' delḳes*, and a dark rainy night, *ṛadra'*.

If on a bright sunny day the view is not clear and the horizon is slightly hazy, the day is spoken of as the *ṛaṭâṭ mâ ja'ṭi-š-šowf*. During the hot summer days the noon atmosphere is almost opaque and the sun resembles a yellowish disk; this is the *čatme* (or *čitâm*). In autumn and winter a dense moist [821] fog, *ḳubejs* (or *kubejs*), hangs over the country. The Bedouins think that the fog can hear like human beings and is afraid of the fox, and therefore they shout at it: "O father of the fogs, run away! The fox! *Jâ-ba ḳbâs 'ank aṭ-ṭa'leb.*" They take fog to be the creation of the earth spirits, *ǧinn*, as it usually appears to come out of gullies and jagged rocks, where it also remains longest. Besides the *ḳbejs* in the cool season, the *'aǧâǧ* and *sarâb*, which occur in the hot season, are likewise the work of the *ǧinn*. On hot and bright days, especially about noon, there appear on the scorched plains of al-Ḥamâd many ponds hedged in with bushes and tall grasses.

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The stranger, deceived by the apparition, urges on his tired animal to the water near at hand and wonders why the animal does not itself hurry. But here the beast is wiser than the inexperienced stranger. Those ponds, bushes, and grasses do not rest on terra firma, but merely vibrate in the air and are nothing but a mirage, *sarâb*. At other times again the *ğinn* raise a strong wind with clouds of dust and sand, which they drive against the Bedouins, trying to blind them, to overthrow their tents, and to entomb every living thing. Such a storm is called *'ağâğe*. Dreadful are the days and even more so the nights during the sand storms. In the south a tiny dark cloud appears on the horizon. The wind dies down, the sun is enveloped with quivering veils, and a peculiarly depressing feeling takes hold of the people. The camels become excited, and, collecting in groups, stop grazing. The tiny veils grow to a cloud, which covers the edge of the horizon to a considerable height and, steadily rising, sends forth a rumbling noise. Before long there appears a dark wall in front of it, which advances along the whole line. The rumbling increases, changes into a wild roar, the wall comes rolling on, covers everything with dust and sand, carries away whatever resists, and buries what it cannot carry away.

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in a great number of raids, bringing back much booty from them. In his last raid he was shot down from this she-camel. The animal saved herself by flight and was inherited by the dead chief's brother, who, however, did not go out on a raid for a whole year. Owing to this the she-camel became so fat that her humps began to hang over to one side. Want soon made itself felt in the tent. The woman was obliged to cook, and there was neither wheat nor *ḏera'*, millet; she had to sew shirts for both herself and her husband, and there was no linen nor any camels to exchange for these necessities. Naturally the woman pined for her fallen hero, and so it came about one evening that, as she was grinding the wheat begged from some neighbors, she happened to observe with more attention than usual both the fat she-camel and her own dilapidated dress; in fear of still greater misery she composed this poem, which was recited to me by Ḥmâr abu 'Awwâd.

Verse 1. *Zowl* is the outside appearance, contour, or shape. *Ḥalâja'* is the manner of acting, behavior, speech, and movements. 2. *Lâ* stands in place of *lâ tab'ad*, meaning "Oh, mayest thou not go away! Oh, hadst thou not left me!" 4. and 5. *Heǧen* is a poetical expression for *rečâjeb*, meaning riding camels. The husband did not remain at home. Between one and three o'clock in the afternoon the heat is at its highest. The rider who wishes to keep his she-camel in good condition should let her rest during that time, *ḳâjile*, otherwise the animal degenerates and becomes incapable of bearing young. 6. *Ḳaṭa'hom ḳaṭ'* signifies "looted them completely, took everything from them, leaving neither camels nor tents." 8. *Mubramât al-fatâjel*, twisted or woven fuses: this phrase indicates that the poem dates from the time when rifles with flint locks were still in use in battle.

1. *Jâ râčeben min fowḳ ḥorren šemâli*
   mâ jilḥaḳ al-miš'âb 'âli mtûneh
2. *ḥorren za'zâ' muẓarrjen lil-eǧǧâli*
   jeṭîr low hw bar-ṛasan jinča'ûneh
3. *naṭṭejt ana riǧmen ṭawîl w-'âli*
   wa-dmû' 'ajni čal-ṛadar sajjalûneh
4. *badejt awaṣṣef ṣâḥb illi zaha' li*
   w-nâšed aš-ša"âr mâ jiḏakrûneh
5. *abu ḳrûnen miṭl ṭajj al-ḥebâli*
   w-al-žiḏle riš al-hîž low ṛalabûneh

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Oh, woe is me! sweetheart of mine!
Alas, she was angry with me, that is why they refused her to me.

A maiden in her anger persuaded her relatives to refuse her to her lover and moved away with them beyond aṭ-Ṭawîl ridge. The expression *ʿazzâk* is used when lightning flashes. [132] In the desert people are often killed by lightning; therefore Allâh is asked to comfort the survivors. The parting with the girl of his heart has struck the youth like lightning.

Niğmet aṣ-ṣubḥ dannat fanâğîlaha
ʿokdeten biẓmîri w-ana-dîraha
jâ ḥwâlen ʿalla-llâh tadâbîraha.

The morning star has shot her rays
Like a knot into my bosom, where I feel it constantly.
Alas, these changes! No one but Allâh can restore my fortunes.

It is to Allâh alone that the disappointed lover looks for help. *Fanâğîl* mean not only glittering coffee cups but the pale rays of the morning star and the reflection of a beauty's white cheeks. The lover has sought his girl in marriage, but without success because her kin object, although at first they were not opposed to him.

Elja ʿâd ani min šammar
waš walaʿani bruwejli
en šarraḳaw ṭâb al-kejf
w-en ṛarrabaw jâ wejli
šiḳren ḏwâjeb zahra
miṯl al-barḳ blejli.

Why did I, a descendant of the Šammar,
Become attached to a Rwala girl?
If they come to the inner desert, I am cheerful of mind,
But should they go to the settled country, then, Oh woe [is me!
Zahra with her blond tresses
Shines for me like lightning at night.

[101 221] The Šammar camp in the Nefûd and to the south of it, and seldom leave their territory. Only a few Siǧâra clans sometimes go to the settled country, *ṛarrabow*, generally to the Euphrates between al-Kûfa and as-Samâwa, to provide themselves with grain.

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would deserve, he would need"; *bel-'own* (for *beṣ-ṣaḥîḥ*), there is no objection, with the consent of all. 2. *Tawâfîž* or *bel-wafaḳ*, *beṣ-ṣadfe*; *tawâfaḳû* or *taṣâdafû*: they happened to settle it among themselves, they punished each other. 3. *Rṣâṣ* are balls, usually leaden ones. *'Ademlijje* is an old rifle with which the marksman is so well acquainted that he never misses his aim. *Saḥar* may mean the lungs, liver, or stomach, while *ma'âlîž* signifies the heart and the arteries leading to it. 4. "My hands have mixed, *anžeḥan*, this powder." The Bedouins frequently prepare their own gunpowder, trusting it more than that sold by the wandering merchants, who mix it with crushed charcoal, while the Bedouin knows that his powder is pure, *naẓîf*. *Anḳaḥt hal-binduḳ*, however, may mean "I loaded this rifle." The sound of a shot is compared to the sound of a meteor falling on a high hill. According to the Rwala this is a frequent occurrence, and they preserve the pieces of broken meteors as keepsakes. 5. Thus 'Awde threatens to shootRšejd, if he does not give up Ṛuṣna.Ršejd would like to marry the girl secretly, but that is no longer possible, as everybody is talking about her and she is looked upon in the same manner as the moon or the dome dedicated to some Mohammedan saint, which can be observed from afar. Both 'Awde and Ṛuṣna were encamped at that time in an-Nuḳra, a region south of Damascus, where along the old Pilgrim Road to Mecca many white domes were built in honor of various saints. Ṛuṣna is then likened to a dome trodden by no man as yet, hence a virgin. 6. She has very thick hair and her tresses end in ostrich feathers entwined in the hair, *zerânîž*. 7. All that Ṛuṣna handles succeeds, grows, takes life, just as the *ṭrajjâwi* rain gives new life to the grass seed. The constellation of the Pleiades catches water in a large bailing bucket and then pours it over the scorched lowland. *Rijâẓ* are depressions in the bare plains into which most of the water runs, fertilizing them also with the mud it carries along. The seeds of the annuals, which sometimes lie dormant for two to four years in these depressions, begin to sprout after an abundant *ṭrajjâwi* rain, and with more rain the lowland becomes a blooming meadow. 8. The thought of Ṛuṣna quickens the beating of 'Awde's heart. The camels do not like the pasture in the settled territory; they yearn for the inner desert, to which they proceed either to the east of Damascus or to the south of Der'ât. Near the latter town rises the hillock of

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[302] top of the head. As a rule only a tuft of it is left standing,
539x the rest being shaven. *Mušarred* (or *jifekk*) *bowšeh*, liberates
852 his loot. Fighting with the Turks (i. e. with the regular army)
[721] was difficult for the Bedouins and therefore greatly desired by them.

Jâ mnîfe jâ miznet aṣ-ṣejf
jâ brûḳaha jil'aženni
tel'ab 'ala-l-biẓ bel-kejf
waš 'âd low jiz'alenni.

O Mnîfe, O thou rain cloud of the early summer!
How dazzling its lightning is to me!
Thou canst play with the fair ones at thy will,
For I [in thy place] should not care if they grow angry with me.

[132] At the close of April, when summer begins, each rain is accompanied by a violent storm by which the atmosphere is greatly refreshed. Mnîfe, the wife of the head chief, needs not envy her female companions, as she excels them in both beauty and power.

Jâ bejt abu nawwâf
jâ minwet al-bâdi
w-rwijhom bel-kêẓ
ḫabra lel-warâdi
wa-ṣḥûnahom bel-lêl
tawḥi lha menâdi
tehûfehen mnîfe
jâ bint al-aǧwâdi.

O thou tent of the father of Nawwâf!
O thou goal desired of the night pilgrim!
In summer their large water bags are
As a great rain pond from which water is brought.
To their dishes at night
The criers noisily invite;
They are prepared by Mnîfe,
A daughter of noble ancestors.

Abu Nawwâf is Prince an-Nûri; his wife Mnîfe is a daughter of the late Prince Saṭṭâm. *Bâdi*, like *sâjer*, means a traveler by night, or a visitor. By both the men's and the

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12. Oh, how many fat wethers' heads have we thrown away
And besmeared the necks of she-camels from the wound made by the knife.

13. A pure heart seeks no gossip,
And should those heroes refuse to salute me (I shall salute them).

14. For both the chief and the herdsman should walk the path of love,
As Allâh keeps the account of each being.

15. A guest is Allâh's guest and must not be insulted,
And this one we shall protect against wrong.

The composer of this poem, Dṛejjem az-Ẓulmâwi, lived in the settlement of Ḳna' and was famous for his hospitality. Whoever traveled from Ḥâjel to Damascus or from Syria to the Šammar or Ḳuṣmân territory stopped with him. Once, in a cold and rainy night, a band returning from a raid reached his abode and knocked on the door of his mud hut. He instantly awakened his servant and ordered him to prepare supper for the guests, many of whom had not before even saluted him. The reciter was Fhejd, a camel herdsman, native of Ḳna'.

Verse 4. When pounding coffee, the pestle is first beaten against the center of the mortar on the coffee beans, then on its brim, and is tapped two or three times to shake off the coffee sticking to the pestle and the brim; this sound is much like the deep howl of the wolf. 6. *Masbû'* is a man afraid to go out on a raid, preferring to stay at home near his wife. *Glebba* is a woman who has not married for love but has been bought by her husband. She cannot run away from him because her kinsfolk would have to return what they got for her, and the husband will not divorce her, hating to lose what she has cost him. She shows dissatisfaction by everlasting opposition and quarreling, especially when she finds her husband to be a coward. *Ṭakk 'aṣijekom* is the tapping with sticks on the she-camels' necks to make them kneel on the ground before a tent or house, where the riders are to be guests. 7. It is for the guests that fresh coffee is made, whereas the other visitors who were attracted by the beating of the pestle in the mortar must be content with yesterday's warmed-up coffee. A *suḥâba* is a dark low cloud, through which the rider has to pass, inhaling its moist smell

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132 516 the while. The *saḥâbe* is always followed by rain. 8. *Nisrijje* is a dry, icy wind of high velocity, a gale. When caught in it, the rider places his right hand in his left and his left hand in his right sleeve, pressing them to his breast to keep his cloak from being opened by the wind and urging his animal on with heels only. 9. He sits in the same posture when a heavy rain, accompanied by a piercing wind, beats against his face. *Nisnâs* is a light, moist wind which cuts the face and penetrates the clothes to the bones. 10. *Mutin al-'alâbi* is one who, disliking to bend his neck or to salute, is full of conceit. *Aṭ-ṭine* or *bejt aṭ-ṭine* is a hut built of large unbaked bricks. 11. *Śaḥâlîl* are the single date-covered twigs of the date bunch, called *genw*. The settlement of Ǧubba lies north-northwest of Ḳna' in the Nefûd. 12. The host paints on both sides of the necks of the she-camels belonging to his guests a thick line with the blood of the animal which he has killed for them. Men seeing these marks ask the host's name, and thus his praise extends to all parts. The head of an animal is never set before the guests but given to the poor.

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